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Authority OJCS 8/19/83
By DJA, NARA, Date 8/26/80

DATE: JCS 02848 — 12 MARCH 1968

DTG : 122014Z

FROM: GENERAL WHEELER CJCS

TO : GENERAL WESTMORELAND COMUSMACV

INFO: ADMIRAL SHARP CINCPAC

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REF: JCS 02847

1. BY REFERENCED MESSAGE I HAVE INFORMED YOU OF UPCOMING ACTIONS TO MEET ALTERNATIVE TWO OF THE FORCE REQUIREMENTS EXPRESSED BY YOU IN MAC 3385. THIS MESSAGE WILL PROVIDE YOU FURTHER BACKGROUND AS TO THE SITUATION HERE AND ITS IMPACT ON FORCE DEPLOYMENTS TO SEA. THE FOLLOWING FACTORS ARE IMPORTANT:

A. LEAKS TO THE PRESS HAVE RESULTED IN A RASH OF STORIES, REFLECTED IN DEBATE IN THE CONGRESS, THAT YOU HAVE ASKED FOR AN ADDITIONAL 206,000 TROOP AUGMENTATION.

B. THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL OPPOSITION IN THE CONGRESS TO ANY FURTHER DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES TO SOUTH VIETNAM. MOREOVER, PROMINENT SENATORS ARE DEMANDING THAT THE PRESIDENT SEEK CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL BEFORE UNDERTAKING FURTHER DEPLOYMENTS OF U.S. TROOPS.

C. A GREAT MANY KNOWLEDGEABLE CONGRES MEN AND NEWS MEDIA PERSONNEL KNOW FULL WELL THAT THE CONUS RESERVE CANNOT SUPPORT ANY SUBSTANTIAL ADDITIONAL DEPLOYMENT WITHOUT A CALL-UP OF RESERVES. (This Wheeler + 2 discussed in Saigon - all understood)

D. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND THE NEWS MEDIA WILL CRITICIZE THE ADMINISTRATION REGARDLESR OF WHAT IS DONE; I.E., SOME WILL CRITICIZE BECAUSE FURTHER DEPLOYMENTS ARE MADE WHILE OTHERS WILL CRITICIZE ON THE BASIS THAT MORE WAS NOT SENT.

2. AT A MEETING AT THE WHITE HOUSE LAST NIGHT TO DISCUSS THE AUGMENTATION YOU REQUESTED IN MAC 3385, THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY STATED THAT, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS AND CRITICISM, HE PROPOSES TO SAY IN EFFECT: WESTMORELAND ASKED FOR THESE FORCES (30,000) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE; THEY WERE ALL WE COULD REALISTICALLY GET TO HIM TO BOLSTER HIS COMBAT STRENGTH DURING THE NEXT THREE TO FOUR MONTHS. WE INTEND TO BUILD UP THE CONUS STRATEGIC RESERVE IN ORDER TO IMPROVE OUR OVER-ALL CAPABILITIES. WE WILL LOOK AT OTHER REQUIREMENTS IF AND WHEN THE SITUATION NECESSITATES. (What I wanted were reserves in the bank)

3. FURTHERMORE, I WAS DIRECTED TO KEEP YOU INFORMED OF THE STATUS OF OUR FORCES IN THE UNITED STATES SO THAT YOU WILL NOT IN FUTURE BE PLACED IN THE POSITION OF ASKING FOR SOMETHING THAT DOES NOT EXIST OR IS NOT AVAILABLE. (Whether knew that I knew what was available, whether wanted a requirement that would permit the development of a strategic reserve for Westmoreland to use. I did not know what I would need — this depended upon the strategy, political & military requirements, enemy action, etc — I wanted a bank of reserves from which to draw.)

4. I WILL APPRECIATE AS ALWAYS ANY COMMENTS YOU MAY CARE TO OFFER. WARM REGARDS.

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